

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 PC-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-12 /097 W
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R 060830Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9692
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
/CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINS, SOPN, KS
SUBJECT: REACTION TO NDP AMNESTY PROPOSAL

REF: SEOUL 1747 (DTG 030734Z MAR 78)

1. OPPOSITION NDP SUBMITTED TO SPECIAL SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROPOSAL FOR GENERAL AMNESTY OF PRISONERS AND EX-CONVICTS. PROPOSED DATE IS AUGUST 15 (KOREAN INDEPENDENCE DAY) AND SCOPE INCLUDES EMERGENCY DECREE VIOLATORS AND GENERAL CRIMINALS (EXCEPT ANTI-COMMUNIST LAW VIOLATORS AND THOSE CONVICTED OF "CRUEL" CRIMES). PRIME MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO NDP LEADER LEE CHUL-SEUNG'S INTERPELLATION ON PROPOSAL WAS NEGATIVE, BUT NOT PARTICULARLY STRONG. PM REPLIED ROKG PLANS TO RELEASE PRISONERS "AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE" BUT WITH CONDITIONS ATTACHED, AND ADDED AMNESTY WAS PERROGATIVE OF PRESIDENT ALONE. DRP POLICY-MAKER PAK CHUN-KYU NOTED ROKG STUDIED POSSIBILITY OF GENERAL AMNESTY IN 1973, BUT BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE "PROBLEMS FROM STANDPOINT OF SOCIAL
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ORDER", DECIDED INSTEAD TO AMNESTY PRISONERS ON SELECTED BASIS. YUJONG, HOE FLOOR LEADER LEE YONG-KUN SAID GENERAL AMNESTY WAS "UNNECESSARY" BECAUSE OF ROKG'S PAST USE OF SELECTIVE AMNESTIES.

2. PRESS REACTION TO PROPOSAL DIFFERS IN TONE FROM RULING CAMP'S STATEMENTS. MOST PRESS TREAT PROPOSAL POSITIVELY

AND URGE THAT IT BE GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. CHOONGANG
ILBO: "QUITE JUSTIFIABLE"; WILL FURTHER ACCELERATE THE
REALIZATION OF NATIONAL CONSENSUS". EVEN OFFICIAL SEOUL
SINMUN CARRIED EDITORIAL FULLY SUPPORTING PROPOSAL AND
URGING ROKG ACCEPTANCE. COMMENT: EITHER ROKG IS ENOUR-
AGING PRESS TO PRINT FAVORABLE COMMENT ON PROPOSAL OR,
POSSIBLE, SIMPLY DOES NOT FEEL NECESSITY, IN THIS CASE,
FOR STIFLING VIEWS DIVERGENT FROM GOVERNMENT LINE.

3. DISSIDENT SOURCES ARE SUSPICIOUS OF ROKG ON THIS
ISSUE AND DO NOT YET TAKE SERIOUSLY CHANCES FOR ENACT-
MENT OF GENERAL AMNESTY. HOWEVER, THEY SUSPECT ROKG
MAY HAVE MADE KNOWN TO NDP DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AMNESTY
PROPOSAL WOULD NOT BE STRONGLY OPPOSED, AND SEE POSSI-
BILITY THAT ROKG MAY HAVE ENCOURAGED AMNESTY IDEA.
DISSIDENTS NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT IN PAST, ROKG HAS HELD
OUT "CARROT" OR AMNESTY IN RETURN FOR CONCESSIONS FROM
DISSIDENTS. SOURCES INFORMED EMBOFF THAT PROPOSAL AND
REACTION TO IT WILL NOT ALTER THEIR BEHAVIOR.

4. PROSPECTS REMAIN SLIM THAT RULING PARTY WILL ALTER
ANNOUNCED PLAN OF BLOCKING ACTION ON AMNESTY PROPOSAL
DURING REMAINING TWO DAYS OF ASSEMBLY SESSION.
STERN

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Message Attributes

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